



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

News Release

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UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT 3.7 PERCENT

HONOLULU— The Hawaii State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations announced today that the statewide unemployment rate in January was 3.7 percent, a slight increase over December's revised unemployment rate of 3.6 percent. Since October 2002, the unemployment rate has been under 4 percent while the national unemployment rate stood at 6.5 percent in January.

In January, the number of non-agricultural payroll jobs in Hawaii decreased by 8,700 over-the-month, with seasonal factors contributing to the bulk of the job declines.

Post-holiday staffing cuts in general merchandise stores and clothing stores resulted in the loss of 700 and 400 jobs respectively, as retail trade as a whole declined by 1,600 jobs. Influenced by similar seasonality, wholesale trade fell by 300 jobs, while food services and drinking places, now classified under the NAICS sector of leisure and hospitality, decreased by 400 jobs. Employment in the federal government was also affected by the end of the holiday season, with cuts at the U.S. Postal Service and the military exchanges partially responsible for the reduction of 700 federal jobs.

(more)

State government contracted by 3,300 jobs, largely due to the winter schedule release of non-teaching support staff at public schools and the University of Hawaii system. Also due to winter break, private education employment decreased by 900 jobs.

The nurses' strike in December had a two-prong effect on employment in January. On the one hand, the health care and social assistance NAICS sector grew by 600 jobs, as the majority of striking nurses returned to work. On the flip side, the NAICS sector of administrative and support and waste management, which include temporary help service firms dropped by 900 jobs. This was in part due to the end of service for some of the temporary health care workers needed during the strike.

Beginning in 2003, state and national labor force estimates have been updated using data from the 2000 decennial census instead of the 1990 data. This revision process primarily affected the levels of labor force estimates, and also to a much lesser extent, unemployment rates. Hawaii's labor force in January was comprised of 575,100 employed and 21,900 unemployed.

Also, starting this year the program that conducts the monthly survey of non-agricultural payroll jobs began estimating jobs with a new industry classification system, known as the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Comprehensive information on NAICS can be accessed at www.census.gov/naics.

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UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (not seasonally adjusted)

	JAN 2003	DEC 2002	JAN 2002
STATE	3.7	3.6	4.9
HONOLULU*	3.4	3.3	4.6
HAWAII COUNTY	5.0	4.8	5.9
KAUAI	4.6	4.9	6.6
MAUI COUNTY	3.7	3.8	5.1
Maui Island	3.6	3.7	5.1
Molokai	7.6	7.5	6.3
Lanai	1.6	3.8	5.1
U. S.	6.5	5.7	6.3

* City & County of Honolulu

COMPARATIVE RATES - U. S. AND HAWAII

